in the process of decision making by entrepreneurs who wish to set up such projects.

I.A. Services

6253. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to improve the services of Indian Airlines and Air India;

(b) whether these Airlines are having parity in air fare with other private Airlines; and

(c) if not, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) Air India and Indian Airlines are taking steps to improve their product, image and on time performance.

(b) and (c) Airlines are free to fix the fares on domestic sectors in their own commercial judgement keeping in view the increases in input costs and the impact on traffic. As regards international fares, the increases are initially discussed and agreed to by the airlines at the Tariff Co-ordinating Conference of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and implemented with the approval of the respective Governments. Such review of international fares is undertaken by IATA for different sectors from time to time.

Air Crafts Owned by Air India

6254. SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of air craft used for carrying passengers by Air India at present;

(b) the actual requirement of air craft;

(c) whether Government have any plan to purchase air craft from other countries; and

(d) if so, the number and details thereof and the amount involved therein?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) Air India has, at present, 28 aircraft in its fleet.

(b) to (d) Requirement of aircraft and expansion/ renewal of fleet by Air India depends on the resources of the airlines, traffic requirements, suitability of the aircraft type, viability of operations on various sectors/routes etc.

Conversion of Manual Exchanges in Gujarat

6255. SHRI VIJAY PATEL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to convert the existing Manual Telephone Exchanges in Gujarat into electronic exchanges;

(b) if so, the details thereof district-wise?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) No manual Telephone Exchange is in existence in Gujarat.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

Upgradation of BPO Vaishkanti Allahabad

6256. DR. AMRIT LAL BHARTI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that Vaishkanti Village of Chail Parliamentary Constituency in district Allahabad has been declared Ambedkar village has been increasing regularly;

(b) whether the condition of branch post office of the village is same as it was in old times and several Members of Parliament have requested to upgrade this branch post office to sub-post office;

(c) whether the Government have taken any concrete steps to upgrade this branch post office to sub-post office and for its development;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) The Department has no information that the village Vaishkanti has been declared as Ambedkar village. The population of the village has been increasing regularly as in case of other villages.

(b) to (e) The extra Departmental Branch Post Office was opened on 12th October, 1971 and continues to be an Extra Departmental Branch Post Office till date. The proposal to upgrade this Branch Post Office into a Departmental Sub Post Office was examined repeatedly at different times but the same was not found justified on the basis of work load and income and cost.

Crisis in Mineral Exploration Corporation Limited

6257. SHRI HARADHAN ROY: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:-

(a) whether the Union Government has received any representation in respect of the crisis being faced by the workers of mineral Exploration Corporation Limited;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken in this respect ?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) to (c) The Government have received representations from various sources against closure of area offices, sale of land and buildings in various places, transfer of personnel etc. It has been decided to maintain status quo in this regard for the present.

[Translation]

Bailadila Mines

6258. DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government contemplate to give the iron ore mine, B-11 situated in Madhya Pradesh to private company on contract;

(b) whether the State Government have sent any proposal or sent any suggestion in this regard; and

(c) if so, the details of the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) to (c) Based on the Government approval for development of Bailadila 11-B iron ore deposit in the joint venture, NMDC signed a joint venture agreement with Nippon Denro Ispat Limited (NDIL) on 10th July, 1995 and a new Joint Venture (JV) Company namely Bailadila Mineral Development Company Ltd. (BMDC) was incorporated on 31st July, 1995. Further, NMDC submitted its application to the Government of Madhya Pradesh for transfer of 11-B mining lease in favour of the JV company.

The Government of Madhya Pradesh recommended the proposal vide their letter dated 6.1.96 and sought prior approval of the Central Government from the Ministry of Mines, as required under the provisions of the MMRD Act, 1957, for transfer of mining lease of Bailadila Deposit 11-B in favour of the JV Company. While seeking the Central Government approval, the State Government also proposed to incorporate certain conditions such as setting up a steel plant, involvement of the State Govt. in the equity of the JV Company to the extent of 20%, recruitment of manpower from the State especially from District Bastar, establishment of schools/hospital in the area by the JV Company etc. The Ministry of Mines have approved the proposal on 21st March, 1996 subject to observance of the provisions of MMRD Act, 1957 and Mineral Concession Rules, 1960 and also that "the State Govt., the proposed joint venture company, i.e., Bailadila Mineral Development Company Ltd. and NMDC should arrive at a uniform and agreed set of conditions for the transfer and incorporate them in an agreement or any other appropriate legal instrument that may be executed between the parties."

Ministry of Mines vide their letter dated 13.6.96 requested Government of Madhya Pradesh to inform whether NMDC has consented to the conditions that the State Government proposed to incorporate under Rule 27(3) of the MCR, 1960.

The State Government of Madhya Pradesh has requested Ministry of Steel vide their letter dated 19.6.96 and 3.8.96 to advise NMDC to send their consent on the conditions proposed by the State Government.

The Hon'ble High Court at Calcutta granted a stay order on the decision to transfer the lease of 11-B iron ore mines in favour of joint venture company on 16.4.96 on a public interest petition filed by Shri Gurudas Dasgupta and Shri Jibon Roy, Members of Parliament. The writ petition was dismissed by the Hon'ble High Court on grounds of jurisdiction on 10.5.1996. However, the operation of the order was stayed by the Hon'ble High Court for a period of three weeks upto 31.5.1996. On a petition by the JV Company against this order, the Hon'ble Calcutta High Court has ordered that the interim stay granted by the learned trial judge will remain suspended till the disposal of the appeal preferred by the Company and the appeal preferred by Shri Gurudas Dasgupta against the order dismissing the original writ petition on jurisdiction grounds. These appeals are to come up before the regular bench.

A Public Interest Litigation (PIL) has also been filed in the High Court of Delhi in July, 1996 against the transfer of Bailadila Deposit 11-B. The case last came up for hearing on 26.3.97 when it was adjourned again.

The subject is very important and needs detailed examination on various aspects. However, since the matter is pending before the Court, the Government would like to await the judicial verdict.

[English]

Telephone Advisory Committee, Karnataka

6259. SHRI RAMCHANDRA VEERAPPA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Telephone Advisory Committee of Karnataka for District level and State level has been constituted;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the name of the members nominated from the Karnataka?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Telephone Advisory Committee for Karnataka Circle and for some District levels have been constituted. The names of TAC constituted are given as under:

Karnataka (Circle level)

Bangalore

Belgaum

Hubli (Dharwad)

Mysore

(c) As per Statement attached.

Statement

Karnataka Circle Tac

The following persons are nominated on Telephone Advisory Committee for Karnataka Circle.

'Public Workers and Others'

1. Shri Shabbeer Pasha
   CA, 19/1, Malavalli,
   Rama Rao Road,
   Bangalore-560002.